



Above: Part of a handline catch of sweetlip, schnapper, trevally and kingfish, taken during Mr. van Pel's investigations. Right: Mr. Harold Allen, 85-year-old Norfolk Island fisherman, caught this huge grouper during the survey.



Norfolk Island Fisheries Survey

Though popular edible species of fish are very plentiful around Norfolk Island, transport and marketing of catches offer serious problems.

By H. VAN PEL*

NORFOLK Island is the only territory within the South Pacific Commission's area which does not have a tropical or sub-tropical climate. Its flora and fauna are quite different from anything found in other South Pacific territories.

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Norfolk Island, five miles long by three wide, is situated on an underwater plateau, sixty miles by twenty. The island has a population of about 1,025. Seabirds and rabbits alone inhabit two smaller islands nearby.

Depths over the underwater plateau vary, but the bottom is invariably rocky. Both pelagic fish such as bonito, tuna and kingfish, and coastal or bottom species such as sweetlip and grouper, are very plentiful around Norfolk Island, and large catches can be taken in a variety of ways.

Small motor fishing boats are used. Due to the absence of any harbour or shelter they have to be launched and landed by a crane on a small pier, and can operate only in good weather.

Fishing with poles or handlines from the rocky shores is popular, though most of the fishing is done from boats. Bulk of the catch is provided by the sweetlip Emperor (*Lethrinus chrysostomus*), but other species such as grouper, trevally, kingfish, bonito, shark and stonefish are also caught in quantities.

Special mention must be made of the "dream fish". So far I have not been able to obtain a correct identification of this fish, but I have been informed by reliable persons that eating it very often results in nightmares.

A whaling station has been established on Norfolk Island and its allotted quota

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Humpback whale being flensed at the Norfolk Island whaling station.

given to this problem finding, and then the compiled findings of the four groups were distributed to the Course membership and a summary of the problems presented as a panel discussion at a general session. Throughout the Course, this compiled list of problems was useful to the staff and the planning council in the development of the Course content.

Following the report-back session on the problem-finding groups, four permanent study groups were organized to deal with the main study topics of the Course. These were established by the staff, and the membership of each study group was balanced according to different categories of workers, sex, geographical distribution, and educational background. At least two staff members were a part of each group.

These study groups remained the same throughout the Course in order to provide the trainees with an opportunity to study and experience how small groups interact and grow in effectiveness. Study groups usually met for two periods in the morning. An effort was made in each to evaluate not only progress, but also its group behaviour.

The Programme

Four study topics were covered during the Course which were focused on village life. They were:

- (i) Finding the health needs and problems in the village;
- (ii) how the health of the village is influenced;
- (iii) how changes are brought about in village life;
- (iv) planning and organizing health education activities and programmes.

Four staff members and four trainees—one of the latter selected from each study group—formed the Planning Council. The responsibility of this group was to plan the programme of study in terms of the problems and interests of all the trainees. This group considered the study topics proposed by the staff, determined the length of time to be spent on each topic, and its method of presentation and summarization. Co-ordinating the Course committees' reports and activities as well as selecting the staff member to organize the plenary sessions were other responsibilities of this group.

In order to give trainees an opportunity to apply some of their new ideas to a realistic work situation with an emphasis on team-work, the study groups spent an afternoon session toward the end of the third week on an "action problem". This problem was developed by the planning council, and was presented as a field report on an imaginary atoll. The groups were asked to discuss this and prepare a written summary

covering what was done wrong; what was done right; what was left undone; and what additional work might be done to improve the health of the hypothetical island.

Since different categories of workers and professions were represented at the Course, it was expected that a divergence of interests would occur. Consequently, starting with the second week, special-interest groups were organized by the planning council. Emphasis in all was on the health education aspects of problems in these areas, rather than on technical information. Whenever a group wished to observe at first-hand a particular problem in a field setting, arrangements were made for field visits.

During the Course, various groups visited schools, food plants, water treatment points, the tuberculosis hospital, a village clinic and a dairy as part of their work. All field trips were carefully planned and carried out for a purpose connected with health education activities in their areas.

During the Course, interest was expressed in receiving special information in the use of motion pictures, film strips, flannelgraphs, flip charts and posters. Two special evening sessions were scheduled with the purpose of focusing attention on the limitations of these media and clarifying their function and use in an overall health education programme in the territories concerned.

Library And Recreational Committees

A library committee was formed and had the responsibility of arranging the various books, publications and other materials used by trainees and staff. This committee also prepared displays to stimulate interest in pertinent materials and to encourage the general use of the library facilities.

A recreation committee set up with the assistance of trainees from each study group was responsible for organizing all types of recreation and sport activities. A recreation room adjacent to the living area was provided with table tennis equipment, record player, soft-drink machine and magazines.

Evaluation

An evaluation committee composed of trainees and assisted by a staff member was set up to determine the relative success and weakness of the Course in terms of its objectives and the expectations of the staff and trainees. Several evaluations were carried out during the Course to allow each member to examine the progress he was making as a group member as well as in new ideas about health education. This information was of great value in determining the subsequent Course activities.

In order to appraise the Course itself and to form a basis for future planning and follow-up work, the evaluation com-

mittee devised a comprehensive questionnaire which was answered by the trainees on the last day.

With the belief that helping groups in villages to find and solve their health problems is an essential part of health work, emphasis throughout the Course was placed on group work. Besides basing the Course itself on the group method, opportunities were provided the trainees to study and evaluate individual and group behaviour as well as to determine how the principles of group work could be applied to their health work.

Assisting the trainees to relate what they were learning at the Course to their back-home work was an important part of the Course. Throughout, careful attention was given to this problem, and during the last two days the trainees met by districts to discuss and plan what they might do as individuals, and how they might work together and co-ordinate their health education activities and programmes upon their return home. Two sessions were given to this back-home planning activity, and the ideas of each group were shared at a final plenary session.

As the Course proceeded, both the staff and the trainees became increasingly aware of the need for follow-up work after the Course in terms of support and reinforcement for the trainees. At their final meeting after the Course, the staff agreed that each trainee would be visited by at least one staff member regularly, starting six months after the Course. A tentative work plan was set up, and will be carried through in the district schedules.

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is 120 whales per year. These are humpbacks, caught near the shore during their migrations to and from warmer waters near the Equator.

Actually, transport and marketing are the main problems in the development of commercial fisheries on the island. The distance from Norfolk Island to Sydney is 930 miles. However, frozen fish fillets have to be shipped there by the only regular shipping line, which operates via the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands, a distance of close on 3,000 miles.



According to Norfolk Islanders, this "dream fish" when eaten often causes nightmares.